



## Synopsis

Full-color photos. Unravel the remarkable mysteries of the ancient peoples who built great palaces and pyramids, and developed an accurate calendar and a knowledge of astronomy without the benefit of telescopes or written language.

## Book Information

Age Range: 8 and up

Lexile Measure: 1050L (What's this?)

Series: Eyewitness books

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Best Sellers Rank: #424,457 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #141 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Central & South America #154 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Ancient Civilizations #586 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Reference

## Customer Reviews

Grade 3-5-The three major civilizations of the Americas are introduced here in a compare-and-contrast, scattershot approach. Small, sparkling, full-color captioned photographs of cities, pottery, jewelry, and clothing accompany one-paragraph texts on such general topics (treated on two pages each) as farming, hunting and fishing, family life, and more. Photos of the Mexican National Archeological Museum's re-creations of scenes of daily life are used to depict such ancient activities as trade, tribute, and medicine. Illustrations from the pages of the Mayan codices are reproduced throughout, but there is no explanation of their significance until page 40, or of what the conquering Spaniards did with them. Although the pictures are bright, clear, and attention grabbing, the text is just random facts scattered across the pages. These majestic cultures are done a disservice by this weightless flitting from topic to topic. Frances E. Millhouser, Reston Regional Library, Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

...a mini museum between the covers of a book. [Eyewitness series] -- The New York Times  
These books' striking visual impact will draw in even the most casual readers. [Eyewitness series] --  
School Library Journal --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I buy books to donate to local schools and I know I will never go wrong with a DK Eyewitness book. They are informative, interesting and entertaining and they whet the appetite to seek out further information. All classrooms should have a collection of these books and if you donate books to local schools or after-school programs, you'll get the best bang for your buck with ANY book published by DK Eyewitness Books.

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Great book, we home school.

Quick delivery. Good service. My grandson is enjoying this book immemsely. This series of books is excellent. I highly recommend these to anyone, even adults. They are brimming with information.

I am quite satisfied with my purchase for the quality and especially the price. I rely on for all of my reading materials.

This is another excellent entry in the Eyewitness Books series, for young readers. The illustrations, as always, are wonderful. The slick pages speak to a quality production. The text is written well and conveys information accessible to the series' audience. The volume begins with an historical perspective on the three civilizations--Aztec, Maya, and Inca. After that, as with other volumes in the series that focus on civilizations, we read of the everyday life and context of the people being examined. What topics are considered? Farming, hunting/fishing, cities, family and home life, food and drink, religion, medicine, literacy and numbers, clothes, the arts, and so on. All discussions provide enough detail to give young readers a pretty good sense of each society. This particular work ends with the Spanish conquest of the New World and, with it, the end of these three impressive societies. So, to summarize. . . . A strong entry in the series of Eyewitness Books. Young

readers interested in these early civilizations will enjoy this work.

I am an ESOL teacher who has to teach about a variety of topics daily. I am currently teaching about Native Americans and this book helped quite a bit with teaching about Maya, Aztecs and the Inca. The topic is so absorbing, I'm having trouble fitting the North Americans in! The pictures and artifacts are very interesting and I thought well presented. I think we have mostly small items related to these civilizations so it is hard to see how Eyewitness could have differentiated them more. I could be wrong but think this book was really helpful to my students. They have little concept of these cultures as all come from Asia. It's fun and not as boring as they thought.

My assumption is that a DK Eyewitness Book entitled "Aztec, Inca & Maya" would devote sections to each of the three great civilizations that Spanish explorers encountered and eradicated in the 16th century. The Aztec empire stretched between the Pacific and the Atlantic coasts of Mesoamerica, the Maya kingdom was found in the eastern part of Mesoamerica, and the Inca Empire stretched 4,000 miles along the western coast of South America. But this book considers the people of these regions to be a mosaic of tribes and nations so that most of the chapters are topical, talking about food and drink, religious life, masks, and such in terms of all of the cultures that apply. There are a few specific chapters devoted to the Incas and their ancestors and Cities of the Andes, but most toss in everything together. I have to admit, I do not find this approach to work anymore than one about Mediterranean cultures that lumps Spain, Italy and Greece together with the likes of Portugal, Sicily, and Crete thrown in for good measure. In this volume the Olmecs, Teotihuacans, and Toltecs are thrown in for good measure, but not so that you can have anything close to a clear conception of the specific cultures. There are some topics where it makes sense to talk about multiple cultures, such as the Human sacrifice by the Incas and Aztecs, but that does not apply to all of these topics. Consequently, I am tempted to get different colored highlighters and color code the three main cultures throughout the book so it is easier to make the connections. As always, the chief attraction of this Eyewitness Book is that it is filled with photographs of artifacts from museums around the world, from the Archaeological Museum in Lima the National Palace in Mexico City to the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence and the Rietberg Museum in Zurich (a subtle reminder that a lot of New World treasures made their way to Europe). Most of us will never get to see a Toltec coyote warrior inlaid with mother-of-pearl, the Gateway of the Sun at Tiahuanaco, or a "teponaztli" (horizontal drum) in person. "The Los Angeles Times Book Review" called one of these volumes "Like a mini-museum between the covers of a book," which is so on point that DK always

puts that quote on the back. Almost as important, Elizabeth Bauedano provides detailed captions for the illustrations so that you know what you are looking at and what it means. Consequently "Aztec, Inca & Maya" works better as a supplemental source than as an introduction to these fascinating civilizations.

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